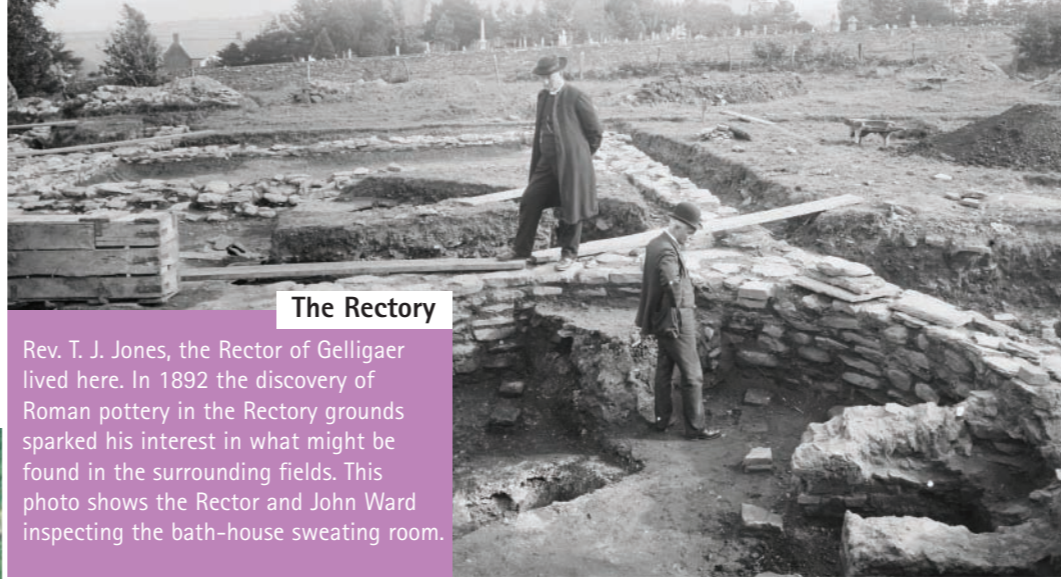


Take a walk around the Roman Fort

Local people have always found Roman objects; if you know where to look, you can find evidence of the Romans too! This walk around the Roman Fort site takes about 30 minutes. Start from the Viewpoint - Number 1 below and follow the numbers around the route.



The Rectory

Rev. T. J. Jones, the Rector of Gelligaer lived here. In 1892 the discovery of Roman pottery in the Rectory grounds sparked his interest in what might be found in the surrounding fields. This photo shows the Rector and John Ward inspecting the bath-house sweating room.

Children's Clue Trail

Greetings! My name is Secundus and I was a potter here at the Roman Fort. Archaeologists have found my mark – SEC.FEC – on some of the pottery finds.



During my time here, I was always forgetting where I'd put things, so I've put a special set of clues along your route. Follow my clues and find my objects. Collect a letter at every stop, and put them in the grid below to spell a word associated with the site.

If you are really adventurous (and have some paper and a crayon handy) you can do a rubbing of the shapes and join them together to form a bigger picture of an animal often connected to the Romans.

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Bath-house

Local people thought there were more buried walls in this field and, in 1908, John Ward explored this area, finding an annex to the fort which housed the Roman baths – a suite of hot, warm and cold rooms as well as the circular sweating chamber, shown here.

Earlier Wooden Fort

The original fort was built here around 74 – 78 AD. Housing up to 1000 infantry or 500 cavalry it was destroyed by fire, probably to clear the site before the stone fort was built. This site wasn't excavated until 1963.

Gaer Fawr

The first dig in 1899 found the foundations of a 'typical Roman fort'. The fort wasn't perfectly rectangular. The Roman surveyors' tools, used to measure the site, may have been affected by high winds blowing across this exposed site.



The Parade Ground

'A carefully gravelled tract devoid of buildings' was discovered here by John Ward in 1913. This was the parade ground, used for religious ceremonies as well as drill and training.

The natives are restless and dangers abound so I always keep this weapon around.

On winter days with the wind in my face, this helps me keep my cloak in place

I'm not rich, but I've bagged a bit of cash. Can you help me find my stash?

By Jupiter I kept it hidden, this figure was part of my religion

My mother's pin, it's easy to see, reminds me of my family

This vessel is a work of art, and so I stamped it with my mark

To remind me of my home by the sea, I had this brooch made especially for me.

I keep my treasure box under a rock. Can you find the object that undoes the lock?

START and viewing area

To Practice Camps

Training in the Roman army involved felling trees, cutting timber, digging ditches and making ramparts – all good practice for building camps. You can see several of these 'practice camps' either side of the Roman road as it crosses Gelligaer Common.

Heol Adam – Roman Road

Countless Roman soldiers marched along this road, a vital communication link between Cardiff and Brecon. Typically very straight, Roman roads linked forts a day's march apart. Even today, the Roman road stretching north across Gelligaer Common stands out as a straight line on the map.



Rectory Road

Look out for square dressed stones in the walls of Rectory Road. As the Roman fort fell down local people reused the stone. This photo shows the stone outline of the North West Gate in Gaer Fawr.



Lewis School

This was the site of Lewis School, built from stone from the fort. The old school house was used to store and sort items found during the archaeological dig; 'by the end of the exploration there were several wheelbarrow-loads of finds'.

The Romans began their invasion of Britain in 43AD, but faced strong resistance from the Silures, the local people in this area. To secure their position the Romans built a network of forts and roads. This fort housed 500 men, both infantry and cavalry.

South East Gate

There were four entrances to the fort, one on each side. Fragments of inscribed stone found near the South East Gate allowed archaeologists to date the site to between 103 and 111, when Emperor Trajan was in his fifth consulate.

Roman Pottery Kiln

'In digging graves we have come across considerable debris – roofing tiles, brick and urns', wrote the Rector in 1913. This was the site of a Roman pottery kiln.

Roman Cemetery

Romans, by law, had to bury their dead away from inhabited areas. Cremation was common at this time and urns were found here and near the Harp Inn in 1910, suggesting a cemetery in this area.